

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 PM-03

INRE-00 INR-05 SP-02 CIAE-00 SSC-01 PRS-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8646

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEGUCIGALPA 5019

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 5001

1. MISSION SOURCE EARLY EVENING NOVEMBER 19 SAID GROUP REPRESENTING ACTIVISTS HAD MET WITH CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL LOPEZ ON EVENING NOVEMBER 18. GROUP PRESENTED THEIR DEMANDS, WHICH CENTERED ON CHANGES IN MILITARY ORGANIZATION, SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL, AND CERTAIN COMMANDS BUT INCLUDED AS WELL CHANGES IN CABINET AND DISCUSSION OF CERTAIN GOVERNMENT POLICIES (NOT SPECIFIED). AFTER HEARING GROUP OUT, LOPEZ, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, ACCEPTED DEMANDS AND PROMISED TO IMPLEMENT THEM BY DECEMBER 1. HE ASKED ONLY THAT ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE CHANGES COME FROM HIS OFFICE, TO WHICH GROUP AGREED.

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2. THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING APPARENTLY HAS SATISFIED THE ACTIVISTS, AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING, AND THIS HAS DEFUSED SITUATION APPRECIABLY. NO FURTHER DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETINGS ON THIS SUBJECT NOW PLANNED. GIVEN LOPEZ'S PENCHANT FOR PROCRASTINATION, HOWEVER, IT IS MOST POINT WHETHER DECEMBER 1 DEADLIIE WILL BE MET. IF GROUP, IN FACT, HAS BROAD SUPPORT CLAIMED AMONG ARMED FORCES, LOPEZ MAY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE IF HE DESIRES TO CONTINUE IN OFFICE. GROUP IS SO CONFIDENT OF ITS SUPPORT THAT IT COCKILY ASSERTS ANY REPRISALS ON PART OF LOPEZ ARE IMPOSSIBLE. HOWEVER, EVIDENT PREFERENCE OF ACTIVISTS FOR NEGOTIATION INSTEAD OF DIRECT ACTION MAY STILL HOLD EVEN IF DEMANDS NOT IMPLEMENTED BY DECEMBER 1. IN ANY CASE, LOPEZ FOR TIME BEING CONTINUES IN JOB AND CITY IS TRANQUIL.

3. EPISODE INCREASINGLY HAS ASPECT OF PURELY IN-HOUSE AFFAIR AMONG HONDURAN MILITARY. ACTIVISTS APPARENTLY GIVE TOP PRIORITY TO THEIR DEMANDS FOR CHANGES WITHIN THE MILITARY STRUCTURE AND COMMANDS. IF LOPEZ IS WILLING TO SHIFT SOME OF HIS SENIOR COLONELS (WHERE HIS OWN SUPPORT IS CENTERED) TO MAKE WAY FOR THE LIEUTENANT COLONELS AND MAJORS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO BE THE NCULEUS OF THE ACTIVISTS, HE MAY WELL SUCCEED IN RIDING OUT THE CURRENT AGITATION FROM WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. THE DISCONTENTED POLITICIANS AND PRIVATE SECTOR, WHO WERE MARGINED IN THIS CASE, WILL DOUBTLESS CONTINUE THEIR SNIPING AT THE GOVERNMENT BUT ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO BRING ABOUT ANY DECISIVE ACTION SO LONG AS THE MILITARY CONTINUES TO SUPPORT LOPEZ.
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